**Field Trips In and Around the Des Moines Area**

**NATURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge & Prairie Learning Center**  (Free or Minimal Cost)

**9981 Pacific St, Prairie City, IA 50228 Megan 515-994-3400**

More than 200 types of native prairie flowers and grasses; Popular and highly-acclaimed environmental educational programs; Walking trails and auto-tours that offer views of buffalo and prairie plantings. Refuge staff provides schedules, materials, resources and ideas for field trips.

**The Ape Cognition and Conservation Initiative** (Free)

**4200 Evergreen Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50320 Contact: 515.243.3580 <http://apeinitiative.org/>**

The Ape Cognition and Conservation Initiative (ACCI) is the only research facility in North America to house and study Bonobos. An endangered great ape species, Bonobos can be found only along a small stretch of the Congo River Basin in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Central Africa in the wild. Located on 230 acres of pristine Iowa hardwood forest in Des Moines, Iowa, the ACCI facilities include 20 acres of ape-accessible outdoor space. The family of Bonobos in residence include the world famous Kanzi, Nyota, Elykia, Maisha and Teco.

# **Blank Park Zoo**

**7401 SW 9th Street, 50315 Contact Daniela Graham 515-974-2552 / Middle School Cross Curricular 515-974-2550 <http://www.blankparkzoo.com>(registration and downloads)**

Programs: Animal Zoo Detectives, Creepy Crawlies, Kinds of Creatures, Live Animals Presentations, Marvelous Mammals, World Habitats AND Show and Tell programs that come to your site.

**Springbrook Aquatic Education Programs** (Free or Minimal Cost)

**2473 160th Road, Guthrie Center 50115 641-747-2200 [Beverly.Stringer@dnr.state.ia.us](mailto:Beverly.Stringer@dnr.state.ia.us)** [**http://www.iowadnr.gov/Education/CampsWorkshops**](http://www.iowadnr.gov/Education/CampsWorkshops)

Activity Manuals: Iowa Rivers, Fish Iowa, Stream Improvement Projects, Outdoor Skills, Project Learning Tree, Project Wild and Wild Aquatic. Action/Involvement Programs: Iowa Water, Nature Mapping, Environmental Action Projects, Trees for kids .Demonstration Models/Kits: EnviroScape, Stream Table, Aquatic Habitat CD

**Saylorville Lake - US Army Corps of Engineers** (Free)

[**http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/SaylorvilleLake/Education.aspx**](http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/SaylorvilleLake/Education.aspx)

Saylorville Lake Park Rangers and Volunteers offer a wide variety of free educational events available to the public. These programs are scheduled in advance during the heart of the recreation season from late April through the end of September. See the [Schedule of Events Calendar](http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Portals/48/docs/Recreation/ODS/Interp/2013%20Calendar%20of%20Events.pdf) and plan a night to come out and take a "Night Hike" with a Park Ranger to learn about the creatures of the night or bring your bicycle along to "Ride with a Ranger" . All events available to the public are listed under the Saylorville Lake Schedule of Events. Educational Programming: Water Safety, Mammals, Forestry, Prairie Life, Symbols of Freedom, Who Lives There Hike, Butterflies, Iowa Birds, Woodland Wildflowers, Wet Land.

**Polk County Conservation** (Free)

**515-323-5300** [**pccb\_info@polkcountyiowa.gov**](mailto:pccb_info@polkcountyiowa.gov) **<http://www.polkcountyiowa.gov/conservation/education/>**

Field Trips: Habitat Discovery, Geology Rocks, Insect Safari, Trees and Plants, Life on the Prairie, Marsh Madness, Outdoor Skills, Winter Adventure, Wild 4 Wildlife. Classroom Programs Come to You: Amazing Reptiles, Amphibians, Animal Classification, Animals of Iowa, Birds of Iowa, Bug Me, Cool Craniums, Cosmic Connections, Eggciting Facts, Endangered Species, Environmental Heritage, For the Birds, Going Batty, Have to Have a Habitat, Landforms of Iowa, Mammal Mania, Monarch Tagging, Owls, Reduce-Reuse-Recycle, Rock Me, Spiders, Teeth-Claws, Camouflage, To be a Seed, Tracks, Trees are Terrific, Water Cycle, Winter Survival

**City of Des Moines Parks** (Free)

**515-237-1386** [**http://www.dmgov.org/Departments/Parks/Pages/EducationVolunteering.aspx**](http://www.dmgov.org/Departments/Parks/Pages/EducationVolunteering.aspx)

Educational programs, nature story hours, intriguing pond exploration, creepy insect investigations, informative bird programs AND many other programs - Look up their calendar. Additional outdoor programs: include canoe classes and trips, a camping night at Gray’s Lake, eco-art, nature-based scavenger hunts, and a “how-to” on gardening with native plants. Visit [Parks](http://www.dmgov.org/departments/parks) throughout the year to see what’s coming up in your neighborhood that would interest you, your friends, and your family. Educational Documents: [Backyard Conservation and Habitat Creation,](http://www.dmgov.org/Departments/Parks/PDF/BackyardConservationCreation.pdf) C[anada Goose Habitat,](http://www.dmgov.org/Departments/Parks/PDF/CanadaGooseHabitat.pdf) [Herbicide Alphabet Soup,](http://www.dmgov.org/Departments/Parks/PDF/HerbicideAlphabetSoup.pdf) [Native Landscaping Resources,](http://www.dmgov.org/Departments/Parks/PDF/NativePlantResources.pdf) [Native Species Blooming Periods,](http://www.dmgov.org/Departments/Parks/PDF/NativeSpeciesBloomingPeriod.pdf) [Small Urban Landscaping with Native Species](http://www.dmgov.org/Departments/Parks/PDF/WildOnesNaturalLandscapers.pdf)

**HISTORY**

# **Terrace Hill: Iowa's Historic Governor's Mansion** (Free)

**2300 Grand Ave, Des Moines, IA 50312 call 515-281-7205 or visit** [**http://www.terracehilliowa.org/**](http://www.terracehilliowa.org/)

Terrace Hill is open for tours Tuesday through Saturday. Guided tours are given at 10:30 a.m., 11:30a.m., 12:30p.m. and 1:30p.m. Walk-ins are welcome, and groups over 10 people need to make a reservation. Students with a school group are free.

**The State Historical Museum - State Historical Society** (Free, Financial Assistance/Grants)

**600 E Locust St, Des Moines, IA 50319 515-242-5193 or 515-281-4132 [sarah.macht@iowa.gov](mailto:sarah.macht@iowa.gov)**

[**http://www.iowahistory.org/education/museum-education.html**](http://www.iowahistory.org/education/museum-education.html) **(programming and downloads)**

Educational Resources: Exhibit/Discovery Program - [You Gotta Know the Territory,](http://www.iowahistory.org/museum/exhibits/permanent-exhibits.html#territory) [The Delicate Balance: Human Values, Iowa's Natural Resources,](http://www.iowahistory.org/museum/exhibits/permanent-exhibits.html#delicate_balance) [Mammoth: Witness to Change.](http://www.iowahistory.org/museum/exhibits/mammoth/index.htm) Teacher Resources/Curriculum: The Goldfinch, Prairie Voices, Iowa Folklife, Iowa Pathways

**Living History Farms**

**11121 Hickman Rd Urbandale, IA 50322 515-278-5286 <http://www.lhf.org/>**

Tours, Enrichment Programs and Outreach Programs. Living History Farms is a 500-acre open air museum. The museum's mission is to educate visitors and demonstrate the past 300 years of Iowa's agricultural history

**Iowa Gold Star Museum - Iowa National Guard, Camp Dodge** (Free)

**7105 Northwest 70th Ave., Johnston, IA 50131 515-252-4531**

[**http://www.iowanationalguard.com/Museum/Museum.htm**](http://www.iowanationalguard.com/Museum/Museum.htm)

Iowa's premier veterans museum, displays artifacts and tells the story of Iowa veterans from the Mexican War of 1846 to present day.

**Iowa Hall of Pride** (Free and Free Transportation!)

**330 Park Street, Des Moines, IA 50309 515-564-8507 contact Shelly Johnson at 515-564-8510**

**shelly@iowahallofpride.com**

History of Iowa’s athletics, academics, and arts - Hall of Heroes: 27 interactive exhibits. Your students will also love the interactive components of the Hall of Pride, and you will love the learning opportunities around every turn! It is a great place to present positive role models for your students regardless of age or activity.

**CULTURE**

**Ballet Des Moines**

**515-440-1177** [**www.balletdesmoines.org/education/**](http://www.balletdesmoines.org/education/)

Each year, Ballet Des Moines provides thousands of school children in the greater Des Moines area the opportunity to attend special performances of *The Nutcracker* at Hoyt Sherman Place Theater. The school show performances are offered at a low cost of $3 per child with chaperones attending for free.

**Des Moines Art Center** (Free)

**4700 Grand Ave, Des Moines, IA 515.277.4405**

[**http://www.desmoinesartcenter.org/education/educator-resources.aspx**](http://www.desmoinesartcenter.org/education/educator-resources.aspx)

Educator Guides: The information in the Educator Guides is aimed at upper elementary age students and includes images of the architecture, select artwork, questions to ask while viewing the artwork, and art projects related to a few of the works of art. Download the Educator Guides by clicking on both the text and image files.

**Des Moines Metro Opera**

**Contact Greg Van Den Berghe at 515-961-6221 or gvandenberghe@dmmo.org**

[**http://desmoinesmetroopera.org/education-and-community**](http://desmoinesmetroopera.org/education-and-community)

OPERAtion Opera: Des Moines Metro Opera holds the belief that great art should be for everyone. In 1993 OPERAtion OPERA was launched to serve as the community outreach branch of DMMO’s extensive education programs by providing a year-long series of activities for Iowa audiences, with a primary focus on programs geared toward underserved audiences. OPERAtion OPERA operates within central Iowa communities by making the arts accessible to a broader and more diverse audience through a series of free dress rehearsals of our mainstage productions. The program works with nearly three dozen human and social service agencies throughout the greater Des Moines area. These agencies serve children and adults who face social, logistical or economic barriers that would prevent them from attending a live opera performance.

**Des Moines Playhouse (**Group ticket sales can often be found for a reduced price)

**831 42nd Street Des Moines IA 50312 515.277.6261 <https://www.dmplayhouse.com/>**

Children’s Theatre Schedule online: The Playhouse education department encourages self-development through the dramatic arts, explores the skills of the theatre, fosters an appreciation of the theatre, and acquaints students with technical theatre knowledge.

**Des Moines Symphony**

**The Temple for Performing Arts, 1011 Locust Street, Des Moines, IA 50309 Phone: (515) 280.4000**

[**http://dmsymphony.org**](http://dmsymphony.org/academy/)

Instrument Petting Zoo, Pictures at an Exhibit, The Planets, Youth Concerts, Youth Academy

**Metro Art Alliance**

**Contact Emily Saunders, Education Coordinator emily @ metroarts.org or by phone at 515-280-3222.**

[**http://www.metroarts.org/education-outreach/**](http://www.metroarts.org/education-outreach/)

Printable PDF of: [Metro Arts Education program listing](http://www.metroarts.org/documents/cms/docs/Printable_Program_Listing.pdf) Connecting Kids with Culture dollars are available to help support programs

**Gateway Dance Theatre**

**315 East 5th, Suite 12, Des Moines 515-283-8383 [info@gatewaydance.org](mailto:info@gatewaydance.org)**

Provide education, training and arts outreach to promote intercultural understanding and an appreciation of diversity through professionally-directed, quality experiences. Inspired by Katherine Dunham, the Dance Theatre of Harlem, the Alvin American Dance Theatre and established by Penny and the late Lee Furgerson; Gateway Dance Theatre remains committed to its mission of providing education, training and arts outreach programs to promote intercultural awareness and an appreciation of diversity through a professionally directed dance experience. Gateway Dance Theatre (GDT), is an urban arts multifaceted program to provide quality arts programming. GDT is a family- friendly program based on the concept that training in the arts is essential to a complete education. The language of Arts is universal. Music, drama, visual and literary arts are presented with an emphasis on building self-esteem, discipline, awareness and confidence. Gateway Dance Theatre’s presence and active engagement in the community is a catalyst to reach diverse communities to build cultural, leadership and economic relationships.

**SCIENCE**

**Science Center of Iowa**

**401 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Pkwy <http://www.sciowa.org/learn/school-visits/>**

Want to bring your class to SCI, but costs are a barrier? For a limited time, SCI’s school visits are only $2 per student! Contact us at 515-274-6868 ext. 222 or email sales@sciowa.org for details or to schedule your visit! School visit discount made possible by Kim and Jean Austen. Download resources and useful links on their Webpage. Use programming or visit on your own. Field Trip Programs: Wow Science, Messy Science, Investigating Volcanoes, Paper Making, Science Center Pets. Outreach Programs: Wow Science, Air Power, Messy Science, Astronomy, I’m So Egg-Cited, The Egg Drop, Exploring the Five Senses, Making Paper, Hot Air Balloons, Bubbleology, Science is Delicious.

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**Mid-America Energy**

[**http://www.educationandsafety.com/mec/**](http://www.educationandsafety.com/mec/)

Assembly Programs: In partnership with the Science Center of Iowa, MidAmerican Energy provides “Simply Electrifying” programs to schools in its Iowa service territory at no charge. The presentations are delivered to schools in a four-year rotation. Scheduling is coordinated by SCI. The interactive presentation introduces students to the atom and its parts and explains the relationship between electrons and electricity. The program also: demonstrates static electricity, discusses lightning safety, illustrates the differences between current and static electricity, illustrates the effects of electricity on everyday life, explains how electricity is measured, demonstrates common safety methods used in homes and businesses, provides an introduction to energy efficiency concepts. Online Programs: Electric Universe, Louie’s Energizing Lessons, Sniffy’s Underground, Energy Underground

**Des Moines Botanical Garden**

**909 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines, IA 50309 515-323-6290**

[**http://www.dmbotanicalgarden.com/events-programs/youth-families/**](http://www.dmbotanicalgarden.com/events-programs/youth-families/)

Programming for youth and families is designed to engage multiple generations in the Garden’s mission of, “Exploring, explaining and celebrating the world of plants”. Visit Website for current events.

**CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT**

**Tour the Capitol** (Free)

**1007 E Grand Ave, Des Moines, IA 50319 515-281-5591**

The Capitol building houses the Governor’s office, the legislature and the old Supreme Court room. You can schedule a tour of our Iowa Capitol online or take the virtual tour offered there. Tours are intended for groups of 10 or more, but tours for smaller groups can be scheduled.

**Des Moines City Hall** (Free)

**400 Robert D. Ray Dr. (515) 283-4500**

The City Hall can be a fascinating place to visit. It’s the seat of maintaining and governing the city: providing services like parks, libraries, road maintenance, city planning, and zoning. Sometimes it’s possible to meet the city manager, go to a city council meeting, or even meet the mayor. See more on the services parks provide above in the nature and environment section.

**DART Central Station** (Free)

**Cherry St and 6th Ave. 515-283-8100**

With some organizing and interest from you the DART station will schedule a field trip for you. It’s a great way to get your students more comfortable with public transportation and a way to get around the city if your transportation is limited. Jackie from CFUM has been on their field trip and said, “They have a video geared towards kids about their environmental efforts.  They also bused us to their bus garage where we toured the maintenance area, dispatch room, and got to ride the bus through the bus wash.”

**Polk County Courthouse** (Free)

**500 Mulberry St (515) 286-3772**Visit the courthouse and get a tour of the history of the building and the function of the court. Depending on scheduling sometimes you can even sit in on a trial.

**Des Moines Water Works** (Free)

**515.283.8753 or** [**education@dmww.com**](mailto:education@dmww.com)

Education Programs**:** Classroom Presentations (K-8 classes), Water Trunks, group tours (3rd grade through adults). Classroom Presentations: Classroom presentations are interactive learning activities and include student and teacher materials. Topics such as: Understanding watersheds and the water cycle, What causes water pollution, How drinking water and wastewater are cleaned, Preventing pollution, Landfills, recycling, and waste reduction, Household hazardous waste, Water's link to staying healthy

**Waste Removal** (Free)

**Central Office located at 300 E. Locust, Ste. 100 515.244.0021**

Waste removal is a huge function of city government. Schedule a tour with the landfill to learn and see all the different functions that Metro Waste (MW) manages, including trash removal, hazardous waste, recycling and compost. This is really a STEM and civics field trip, as there’s a lot of science in the technologies and processes they use to remove trash safely. MW even have an Environmental Learning Center. Metro Waste Authority converted this farm property, located on the southeast corner of [Metro Park East Landfill](http://www.mwatoday.com/locations/metro-park-east/default.aspx), into a learning center for environmental education through a partnership with [SE Polk School District](http://www.se-polk.k12.ia.us/" \t "_blank) and [Drake University](http://drake.edu/" \t "_blank).

**Food Bank of Iowa** (Free) **2220 E. 17th Street Reach the volunteer and food drive coordinator at 515-564-0330.**

Nearly 400,000 Iowans are food insecure; over a third of these people are Iowa children. The Food Bank of Iowa offers tours and has a number of volunteer opportunities including packing backpacks with food, sorting food, volunteering at the fresh produce stand and more.

**Fire Station** (Free)

Another governmental service that tax dollars pay for that students don’t always know much about are fire fighters. A field trip can be a chance to learn about a profession and the training or qualifications it takes to be a fire, and hear about the support work firefighters do. Scheduling a field trip to a local station should be easy to set up with some advance notice.

**Police** (Free)

Of course there are a number of police stations throughout Des Moines. Schedule a time for students to visit the station nearest you. This is a great time to ask questions, see the emergency call center, learn about rights, see equipment and, in general, a chance to see the world through a law enforcement lens. Scheduling a field trip to a local station should be easy to set up, as outreach to kids is part of what stations are trying to do.